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U.S. Expels 2 Cubans at U.N. in Spy Plot

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Two members of Cuba's United Nations mission were barred from the United States yesterday on charges they had tried to recruit Cuban refugees as spies.

The State Department, in announcing the action, said third secretary Lazaro Espinosa Bonet, 25, had been expelled for trying "to recruit a Cuban refugee for a mission related to the security of the office of the President of the United States."

But the State Department spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey, later amended that statement to make clear that Espinosa's attempt "did not involve the physical or personal security of the President." There was no further explanation from the State Department, the Secret Service or the FBI.

The other Cuban official, first secretary Alberto Boza Hidalgo-Gato, 28, is now in Cuba and will be refused re-entry. Boza, McCloskey said, had "sought information related to the operation of a United States military installation." The spokesman would not name the installation involved.

In a note delivered yesterday to the Cuban mission in New York, the United States warned that all 18 diplomats assigned there should "confine themselves to matters directly related to their duties as officers of a permanent mission to the United Nations."

Singled out for special warning was second secretary Jorge E. Reyes Vega, 25. A similar general warning about activities had been given last Dec. 13, yesterday's official note recalled.

The ousters were made under a section of the U.N. headquarters agreement last invoked in July when Igor Andreyev, counselor of the Soviet mission, was ordered out. Within the past year two Cuban U.N. officials, Homero Saker Zenni and Jesus Jimenez Escobar, have been refused re-entry without public announcement.

Yesterday's announcement, officials said, was made to forestall Cuba's making the story public first in its own version. But details of the barred diplomats' alleged activities were withheld by the few officials who had information, apparently to avoid compromising the FBI's sources.

McCloskey, who said he was "not in a position to elaborate" on his statement that Espinosa's activities involved the presidential office, did add that the attempt was made in the present administration and that he knew of no arrests made or contemplated.

At the Cuban mission, counselor Jose R. Viera said he had no comment, pending instructions from Havana. Cuba's U.N. ambassador, Ricardo Alarcon Quesada, is on vacation at home.